

**. . . a right
to protection
and freedom
from harm**

*A child in foster care
has a right to protection
and freedom from harm,
harassment, danger, injury
and neglect.*



Foster Parenting & Background Clearance Requirements



Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

CA Children's Administration



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What Is a background clearance?

Washington State law requires that any person age 16 and over, who spends time with foster children has a background check.

The purpose of the clearance is to learn if the person has been found to have abused or neglected children, or if the person has a criminal record. Certain crimes raise concerns of a person's character and suitability and whether the person poses a risk to the safety of children.

The background check results show criminal convictions that occurred in Washington State. If a person has resided in Washington State for less than three years, the person must complete an FBI fingerprint check to determine if they have criminal history in other states.

Who must complete a background clearance?

- A foster parent and any person over age 16 living in the foster home, except for foster children;
- Any visiting relative or friend, if staying in the home for more than 24 hours, who could at sometime have unsupervised contact with children in care.
- Grown children coming home for an extended stay, such as summer vacation.
- A person who may transport a foster child at any time without a foster parent present.

The background check should be submitted to DSHS immediately.

No one may have unsupervised contact with foster children until the clearance has been completed and the foster parent has been informed by their licensor that the person is approved to have contact with children.

When can someone spend time with a foster child without a background check?

There are some situations where a person does not need to have a background check before having contact with foster children. These individuals may include:

- A friend, neighbor or relative may provide short term care of less than 24 hours without verifying criminal history. The foster parent must first meet the adult who will be supervising prior to allowing the foster child to spend the night at the friend or neighbor's house.
- Any person who is under the direct supervision and observation of a foster parent at all times and would not be left alone with a foster child;

How do I go about getting a background clearance?

You can obtain a clearance form from the licensor of the foster home, or from the child's social worker.